



# URBAN DISTRICT OF ASHBURTON

## Sanitary Officers

Medical Officer of Health ... ... R. G. HALL  
 Sanitary Inspector ... ... A. FALLOWS

## REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1939

*To the Chairman and Members of the Urban District Council of Ashburton.*

GENTLEMEN,

The following report summarises the general health of the district, and contains particulars of births and deaths, the zymotic and other notifiable diseases, and of sanitary work carried out during the year 1939.

### STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Area of District ... ... ... ...	6,781 acres
Registrar General's estimate of resident population (1938)	2,395
Number of inhabited houses ... ... ...	696
Rateable value on 31st December, 1939 ... ...	£12,661
Product of a penny rate ... ...	£48 17s. 2d.

The district is partly urban and partly rural in character, agriculture being the principal industry.

### BIRTHS AND DEATHS

	Live Births	TOTAL		Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population
		Legitimate	Illegitimate	
Stillbirths	Stillbirths	Legitimate	1	9.19
		Illegitimate	1	
Deaths		M.	F.	Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population
	... ... 29	17	12	12.1
Deaths from diseases and accidents of pregnancy and childbirth:				
				from sepsis ... 0
				," other cause 0
Deaths from	Measles (all ages) ...	...	...	0
	Whooping Cough (all ages) ...	...	...	0
	Diarrhoea (under two years of age) ...	...	...	0
	Influenza ...	...	...	1
	Tubercular disease of the lungs ...	...	...	4
	Other Tubercular diseases ...	...	...	0
	Cancer ...	...	...	4
	Diabetes ...	...	...	1
	Cerebral hemorrhage ...	...	...	1
	Heart disease ...	...	...	6
	Other Circulatory diseases ...	...	...	2
	Bronchitis ...	...	...	3
	Pneumonia ...	...	...	0
	Other respiratory diseases ...	...	...	1
	Appendicitis ...	...	...	0
	Congenital causes ...	...	...	0
	Ill defined causes ...	...	...	0
	Acute and Chronic Nephritis ...	...	...	1
	Senility ...	...	...	2
	Premature birth ...	...	...	0
	Violence ...	...	...	0
	Suicide ...	...	...	2
	Other defined diseases ...	...	...	0
	Unknown ...	...	...	0
	Aneurysm ...	...	...	1
	Puerperal fever ...	...	...	0
	Other digestive diseases ...	...	...	0
	Cirrhosis of liver ...	...	...	0

## NURSING SERVICES. (a) General.

There is a resident District Nurse who works under the Devon County Nursing Association. There is now an Infant Welfare Clinic but no Maternity Centre.

Maternity Cases which are likely to present difficulty and cases of Puerperal Pyrexia can be sent to Hospital at Exeter.

### (b) Infectious Diseases.

Cases of Tuberculosis are treated, if considered suitable, in the County Tuberculosis Institutions.

Infectious cases are sent, when necessary, to the Isolation Hospital at Newton Abbot.

## LABORATORY FACILITIES.

The County Authorities undertake the examination or analysis of clinical material (sputum, swabs, etc.), milk and foodstuffs.

## LEGISLATION IN FORCE.

**The Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890.** Part III. adopted on the 4th November, 1898, came into operation on the 1st January, 1899.

Part IV. adopted on the 5th May, 1921, came into operation on the 25th June, 1921

**The Public Health Act, 1925.** Parts II. (except Sections 21 and 22), III. (except Section 44) and IV. were adopted on the 3rd February, 1927 and came into operation on the 15th March, 1927.

**The Notification of Births Act, 1907.** The whole Act operates within the district in view of the adoption by the County Council of Devon for the whole county area.

The following powers have been conferred upon the Council by Orders of the Local Government Board or the Minister of Health :—

### Local Government Act, 1894

Powers.	Date of Order
Section 13 (2) and 14	10th August, 1898
Section 8 (1) (a) (b) (h) and (i)	10th October, 1927

Byelaws made by the Council have been confirmed by the Minister or his predecessors the Local Government Board with respect to the following :—

Subject.	Date of Confirmation
Nuisances ... ... ... ...	14th March, 1900
Slaughter Houses ... ... ...	19th June, 1899
New Streets and Buildings (now excepting Buildings)	4th December, 1925
Common Lodging Houses ... ...	30th May, 1935
Recreation Ground ... ... ...	21st August, 1935
Buildings ... ... ... ...	22nd August, 1939

## HOSPITAL.

The Town has a well-equipped Cottage Hospital, supported by voluntary subscriptions ; a contributory scheme is in operation for maintenance in hospital.

The Hospital is managed by a local Committee (voluntary). It is used for all general purposes (other than for infectious diseases and infants) and contains 16 beds.

Venereal cases are, if willing, sent to Clinics at Exeter or Plymouth. The Local Authority supplies antitoxin.

The Council have not taken any action in connection with Diphtheria Immunisation.

The Council is now a Constituent Authority of the Newton Abbot Joint (Isolation) Hospital Board.

**Institutional Provision for Unmarried Mothers, etc.** There is institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate and homeless children at Newton Abbot.

**Ambulance.** There is a wheeled ambulance in the town. The nearest motor ambulance is at Newton Abbot (7 miles away).

**Midwives.** Two midwives practise in the district.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

**Water.** The supply to the Town is satisfactory both as to quantity and quality. Bacteriological and chemical analyses have been made twice during the year and have been satisfactory.

**Sewerage.** The present system of disposal—land irrigation—is not satisfactory. The Council prepared a scheme for the construction of sewage disposal works which was submitted to the Ministry of Health and approved, but consent to the raising of a loan is withheld for the period of the war.

**Swimming Pool.** There is a Pool, which is open to the public, at one of the Hotels in the town. The water for the Pool is taken from the mains and undergoes an efficient system of filtration and purification.

**Schools.** The sanitary conditions and water supply of the schools in the district are satisfactory.

## INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) **Milk Supply.** There are five retail dairies in the town. These have been found, on frequent inspection, to be satisfactory.

There are 40 milk producers in the district. Analyses of milk from these producers have been systematically carried out during the year. 99 analyses have been made with the following result:—60 satisfactory, 39 not satisfactory. 15 samples have been tested for tuberculosis and have been found to be negative.

(b) **Meat and other foods.** There are five bake-houses and six slaughter-houses in the town. The bake-houses and slaughter-houses have frequently been inspected and found to be in a satisfactory condition.

## INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

Diseases notified during the year were:—

Scarlet fever	...	...	...	0	Diphtheria	...	...	0
Pneumonia	...	...	...	0	Erysipelas	...	...	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum				0	Puerperal pyrexia			0
Tuberculosis of the Lungs				0				
Other Tubercular diseases:—			Glands	0				
			Peritoneum	0				
			Meninges	0				
			Joint	0				

**Closet Accommodation.** All the closets in the town are of the flush type. Action is being taken under the Public Health Act, 1936, and owners have been ordered to provide a separate closet for every house in the town.

**Scavenging.** Scavenging in the town is undertaken by the Local Authority. House refuse is collected at frequent intervals; a covered lorry should be employed in place of the open one now in use.

## NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis).

Notifications received during the year:—

Diseases.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Smallpox	...	0	0
Scarlet Fever	...	0	0
Diphtheria	...	0	0
Enteric Fever	...	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	...	0	0
Pneumonia	...	0	0
Erysipelas	...	1	0
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	0	0	0

## SANITARY INSPECTION.

Nature of Inspections.	No. of Inspections.	No. of Notices served Informal.	No. of Notices served Statutory.	Result.
<b>Food Supply.</b>				
(a) Milk	...	183	—	Found in fair condition
(b) Bake-houses	...	26	—	Good condition
(c) Slaughter-houses	...	Weekly	—	Ditto
<b>Nuisances</b>	...	Frequent	6	Abated
			0	Complied with

## HOUSING STATISTICS.

### 1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the Year:—

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health and Housing Acts)	...	...	...	...	109
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	...	...	...	...	123
(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 and 1932	...	...	...	...	8
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	...	...	...	...	26
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	...	0
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation					2

2. *Remedy of defects during the Year without Service of Formal Notices* :—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers ... ... ... 2

3. *Action under Statutory Powers during the Year* :—

A—Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936:

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ... ... ... ... ... 0

(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :—

(a) By owners ... ... ... ... ... 0

(b) By Local Authority in default of owners ... ... 0

B—Proceedings under Public Health Acts:

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... ... ... ... ... 6

(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :—

(a) By owners ... ... ... ... ... 6

(b) By Local Authority in default of owners ... ... 0

C—Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936:

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made 0

(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... 14

D—Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936:

(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made ... ... ... ... ... 0

(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit 0

4. *Housing Act, 1936—Part IV.—Overcrowding* :—

(a)—(i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year ... ... 0

(ii) Number of families dwelling therein ... ... ... 0

(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein ... ... ... 0

(b)—Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year ... 0

(c)—(i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year ... ... 0

(ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases ... ... 0

R. G. HALL,  
Medical Officer of Health